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STATEMENT

BY THE

STEAM-SHIP LINES

ENGAGED IN THE

Emigration Trade to North America,

IN REFERENCE TO

RECENT PUBLISHED COMMENTS UPON THE
CONDUCT OF THAT TRADE.

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LIVERPOOL:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM POTTER
EXCHANGE ST. EAST.

1960-1961
1962-1963

STATEMENT BY THE STEAM-SHIP LINES ENGAGED IN
THE EMIGRATION TRADE TO NORTH AMERICA,
IN REFERENCE TO RECENT PUBLISHED COM-
MENTS UPON THE CONDUCT OF THAT TRADE.

THE English and American Newspaper Press have recently published numerous articles reflecting, in no measured terms, upon the conduct of the Emigration Trade by the Atlantic Lines. Those articles have alleged that abuses of the worst kind exist; that the ships are over-crowded; that the sexes are not separated; that gross immorality prevails among the Passengers, who are "huddled together like sheep, and treated like pigs;" that the ventilation is insufficient, the food bad and unwholesome, and the water impure; that the passengers are ill-treated by the crew; that the emigration officers do not perform their duty, and exercise no real supervision over the emigrant steamers; and that there is great mortality amongst the passengers. Newspapers of high position have not scrupled to make these assertions; and the most injurious practices and motives have been imputed to the Atlantic Lines, who are alleged to be actuated by the greed of gain alone.

These allegations have been echoed and re-echoed across the Atlantic, they have been quoted in the various Provincial Newspapers, and in the Newspapers of Foreign Countries which supply emigrants to America, (more especially in Germany, where they have been widely spread by the Government of that country for political purposes,) and they cannot fail to have had a great effect on the public mind.

As, however, these statements are in all material points false

and unfounded, and proceed from persons who have no real knowledge of the facts, and as they are calculated most seriously to injure the reputation of the Atlantic Lines and to discourage Emigration, it is necessary that the actual facts of the case should be placed upon record. In stating those facts, the Lines in question desire to protest in the strongest way against the injustice of such attacks, and to repel the charges made against them which have received such wide publicity.

It is now upwards of twenty years since Emigrants first began to cross the Atlantic in Steamers, and for some years later the majority were still carried by Sailing vessels. But this is now entirely changed, and during the year 1871, 96 per cent. of the total number of Emigrants to North America, proceeded in steamers. The number of steerage passengers so carried last year from Great Britain to North America was about 200,000. They were conveyed in 520 outward voyages; the number in each voyage averaging about 385. Nearly all of these passengers were carried by the following Atlantic Steam Lines:—

The British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Co. (Cunard Line.)

The Liverpool, New York and Philadelphia Steam-Ship Co. (Inman Line.)

The Montreal Ocean Steam-Ship Co. (Allan Line.)

The National Steam Ship Company.

The Anchor Line of Glasgow.

The Liverpool and Great Western Steam Co. (Guion Line.)

The White Star Line.

It is from these Companies that this statement proceeds.

There is no doubt that great abuses did exist, and if the reports of recent investigations by the American Officers of Emigration be true, do still exist in the emigration trade as conducted by Sailing Ships. With a view of preventing those abuses the Passenger Act of 1852 was passed. This statute was repealed in

1855 by an act containing more full and elaborate provisions for the protection of the emigrant. The Act of 1855 was supplemented by one in 1868. These two statutes contain numerous stringent and well-considered regulations conceived in the interest of the emigrant, and are applicable to steamers as well as to sailing vessels.

They provide amongst other things for the proper construction and equipment of the vessel, the state and sufficiency of her machinery, stores, boats, and crew; the quantity and quality of the provisions, the supply of water, the daily allowance of food and water to passengers; the arrangement and size of berths; the due separation of the sexes; proper supply of light and ventilation, and a number of other matters of a like character. The Acts provide heavy penalties for breach of the rules laid down; and contain full provisions for informing the emigrant of his rights; and a speedy mode of redress in case of any breach of contract by the shipowner. The regulations are carried out under the supervision of a staff of Emigration Officers at the port of departure, whose duty it is to see that their provisions are obeyed and assist the emigrants by giving information or advice, and enquiring into complaints. On arriving in America, the emigrants are received by Immigration Officers of the United States or Canada, as the case may be, whose business it is to protect the emigrant in like manner, and who are very active in the performance of their duty.

This system has been found to work very satisfactorily. Under it the emigration trade, so far as it is worked by steam, has been conducted so much to the satisfaction of the passengers that emigration has largely increased, and has for some years reached such an extent as to permit the Companies concerned to fix the fares at the low rate of £6 6s. per adult passenger. At the same time, the steamers employed have increased greatly in size, power, speed, and convenience, and are now, undoubtedly, the finest specimens of the Mercantile Marine afloat. The several

fleets of the Companies above mentioned, amount in burden (gross measurement) to upwards of 300,000 tons, and number some 125 vessels. The Atlantic Lines depend very greatly upon passenger traffic; they are more exclusively devoted to that class of business than any other existing steam lines, and there is great competition among them. Whether it is probable that in view of their own interest, these Companies would conduct their business in the disgraceful manner which has been publicly suggested, is left to common sense and impartiality to decide. With these general remarks it is now proposed to reply to the principal charges which have been brought forward against the Emigration trade.

OVERCROWDING.—Under the Passenger Acts, steerage passengers can only be berthed upon two decks. Upon the upper of those decks the number of passengers must not exceed the proportion of 1 passenger to every 15 clear superficial feet of deck allotted to their use; upon the lower of such decks it must not exceed the proportion of 1 passenger to 18 superficial feet, and if the lower deck is less than 7 feet high, the proportion is increased. As both passenger decks of the Atlantic steamers invariably exceed 7 feet in height, each passenger has considerably over 100 feet of cubic space on the upper passenger deck, and a still greater cubic space on the lower. Furthermore the number of passengers is restricted by the proportion of space clear for open air exercise on the upper deck. One newspaper pictured the emigrant as stumbling helplessly over the cattle and stores piled on the deck. It is scarcely necessary to say that the Atlantic Lines do not carry cattle, and allow no stores on deck. All the space is kept clear for passengers. Before the ship can receive from the Board of Trade her Passenger Certificate under the Merchant Shipping Act, she is surveyed by Government Surveyors, not only as to her structure, machinery and equipments, but also as to the number of passengers she is entitled to carry and her Passenger

Certificate, which must be exhibited in a prominent part of the ship, states that number. In case of there being passengers in excess of the proper complement, the master or owner is liable to penalties. The Passenger Certificates must be renewed periodically, a fresh survey being required on each occasion. The Government emigration survey is additional to and independent of that by the Board of Trade. The emigration officer goes through and measures a new ship, and fixes the number of emigrants which she can carry on each deck and each compartment. Before each voyage he checks the number actually on board, by the previous measurement. In cases where the compartments and berths of emigrants are permanently fixed, the number of passengers allowed in each room is marked upon the outside.

The ship cannot proceed to sea without the certificate of the Emigration Officer that the provisions of the Act as to the

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The ship cannot proceed to sea without the certificate of the Emigration Officer that the provisions of the Act as to the number of passengers and all other matters have been complied with. There is not only an Emigration Survey at Liverpool, but also at the port of call in Ireland, so that there is a double check. There is, therefore, not only no over crowding, but, as above shewn, there cannot be any such thing.

SEPARATION OF THE SEXES: TREATMENT OF FEMALE PASSENGERS.—The Passenger Acts contain clear and minute provisions on this subject. All the single male passengers must either be berthed in the fore part of the ship, in a compartment completely divided and bulkheaded off from the space appropriated to other passengers, or in separate rooms. This rule is strictly obeyed. With regard to married couples, the general practice is to require the wives to berth with the single women, and the husbands with the single men. Some lines insist on this; others allow several married couples, on their own special application, to berth in the same room. On some lines a sliding door, when pushed forward, encloses the passage between two

The "*Liverpool Daily Post*," of 1st October, 1872, says:

With reference to the sleeping accommodation for males and females, the plan adopted on the "Allan" Line appears to us the best, and, if we may be permitted to say so, the only possible arrangement consistent with perfect decency and decorum. The general custom, which, curiously enough, seems to be thought rather a perfection of arrangement, is to place the married people and families in separate cabins. Now, these cabins are constructed to accommodate about twenty persons, and in some cases twenty-four. There are few families of this dimension, except among the potentates of Siam, perhaps, where a king dies and leaves sometimes a family of one hundred and fifty children. Consequently, three or four families are put into these cabins, and sometimes the spare berths are occupied by single women. It is only necessary to remember that people undress when they go to bed, and that fathers of families in the process are not different to other people. For a man to undress in the presence of two other men's wives cannot be proper, to say nothing about the occasional presence of single women. After a full consideration of the subject, the conclusion is forced upon us that the only proper course is the complete separation of the sexes as to their sleeping and eating; and this, in fact, is the practice of the "Allan" Line alone among the companies of the port. The women are all berthed forward or aft as the case may be; but they are entirely separated from the men. On some voyages they are berthed on different decks; that is to say, the men are put on the lower-deck, the upper-deck being reserved for women. It is only, however, at the busiest seasons of the year that it is necessary to use the lower-deck at all. In addition to this security for decency, the quarters of the stewardess are placed so that no one can pass into the women's quarters without being observed by her. Misses Allan have for some time carried a stewardess for stowage passengers, and on some voyages as many as two and three stowage passengers are carried, according to the number of passengers. It is right that Messrs. Allan should have the full credit of having taken this step of their own motion. It at all events shows their anxious desire to protect the emigrants from all unnecessary discomforts.

rooms, and forms a dressing-room for women in the adjoining apartments, which is perfectly private; on the others, arrangements of a like character are made for privacy. The crew are rigidly excluded from the steerage during the voyage. This rule is most thoroughly enforced. They have no communication whatever with the passengers, and nothing at all to do with them. The statements which have been published upon this subject are so entirely unfounded, that the real fact is that complaints of the conduct of the crew towards passengers are entirely unknown and unheard of. Owing to the confined space on board ship, the passengers are necessarily thrown much together on the voyage; but the proceedings of all are from that circumstance so subject to observation that there is the most ample check upon any attempt at improper conduct. The passengers are under constant supervision, and every opportunity is given for complaint. There is not the least danger of contamination to the female passenger. She is just as safe on board as if she were in her own village.

Beyond the careful separation of the sexes, the protection of women, and the due maintenance of discipline amongst the passengers, it is impossible to go. There must necessarily be amongst steerage passengers a large number of people used to a rough life, and who are not very refined in their manners; and some whose moral character is not of the highest kind. It is not in the power of the shipowners to soften their manners or change their characters. Some of the correspondents whose letters have appeared in the newspapers, appear to make it a matter of complaint that this is not done; and some even seem to suppose that the Shipowner is in fault for the rolling of the vessel, and the sea-sickness of the passengers.

VENTILATION.—The Emigration Officers have full discretion under the Act to require that the ventilation shall be sufficient, and that proper ventilating apparatus shall be supplied. The supply of fresh air below is plentiful, and the only difficulty which

the captain has to contend with on this score is the occasional attempts made by passengers to stop up the ventilators. It should be mentioned that the air is supplied by both up and down-cast ventilators, and also by windsails; and as there is a considerable space left between the tops of the berths and partitions and the deck above, a constant current of fresh air can by this means be kept in motion over the whole area of the sleeping apartments. It may also be stated that every day the steerage is thoroughly cleaned out and aired.

FOOD AND WATER.—The Act gives a dietary scale and provides that particulars of the food to be supplied shall be printed on the passenger's ticket, so that he can tell in a moment if he is not receiving that to which he is entitled. All the Companies give food additional in amount to that required by the Act, and of a higher quality. The provisions are inspected by the Emigration Officer at the port of departure, who sees that they are proper both in quality and quantity. The best fresh meat, bread, and vegetables are supplied, and butter, biscuit, sugar, tea, and coffee. There is no limitation in the quantity allowed, although the Act admits of a limit. Great quantities of food being necessarily cooked together the cooking cannot be as perfect as that in wealthy establishments on shore, but it is as good as is practicable. That the food and cooking are appreciated by the passengers, is shown by the fact that the consumption of food per head is very large. The water is of course fresh, every voyage, and there is an abundant supply. The food is served by the Steerage Stewards (a large staff of whom are kept,) by distribution into the cans of the passengers, in somewhat the same way as is done in public institutions on shore. With so many passengers it would be impossible to adopt any other plan.

HEALTH OF PASSENGERS.—One Doctor is always carried, and when the number of passengers is large it is customary to

carry two. Hospital space is provided for the accommodation of passengers who are ill, and proper medical stores and comforts are carried on every voyage. Cases of illness on board are rare. The Captain and Doctor attend daily in the steerage. No epidemic has occurred on board of any of the Steamers of the Atlantic Lines since 1865, although from that year to the present time they have carried nearly 1,500,000 passengers. The death-rate last year among emigrants carried in these Steamers was less than 15 per 1000 per annum; that is, taking the average length of the voyage at twelve days, and assuming that the passengers passed the whole year at sea, the whole rate of mortality would be as above-mentioned. This is a much lower rate than that prevailing in large towns or even in country places. When it is remembered how many of the emigrants are women, children, and old people, this low death-rate will be found to be most important evidence of the manner in which emigrants are fed, berthed, and treated, on board the Steamers of the Atlantic Lines.

INSPECTION BY GOVERNMENT SURVEYORS.—It has been said by the Newspapers that the Surveyors neglect their duty, and that the inspection is a sham. There is not a word of truth in this statement. The duties of the officers are most carefully performed. It is impossible to answer a general and vague statement of this kind more in detail: but the Emigration Board is a public department of the Government and will know what the facts are.

By the foregoing statement it has been shown, that the health of the emigrant is fully provided for; that the female passengers are properly cared for and protected; and that comfort and convenience appropriate to the reasonable requirements of the passengers, and to that to which they are accustomed on shore, are supplied. The passengers are carried across the Atlantic, a distance of three thousand miles, in ten or twelve days, at a higher rate of speed, and in larger and finer steamers, than are

to be found in any other mercantile service in the world—vessels which are most costly both to build and to work, and which have to be kept in the highest state of efficiency. They are so carried in almost perfect safety (casualties being almost unknown), and at a very cheap rate.

The rest is a matter of demand and supply. If the public who now travel in the steerage are willing to pay more, they can have more space at their disposal, more elaborate cooking, and luxuries of every description, by taking their passage in the cabin; or second class accommodation can be provided for them, if they choose to pay for it. But as a body they do not care for luxury and are not willing to purchase it. They want to get across the Atlantic as cheaply and rapidly as they can, and as long as they are well fed, properly treated, and their health cared for on the passage, they ask for no more. If additional space and luxuries are provided, the price of the steerage must be increased and emigration must be diminished. It is for the steerage passengers to make their own choice in the matter. It is a mistake to suppose that all such passengers are emigrants; or that all emigrants are ignorant and helpless people who do not know their rights, or anything of the voyage across the Atlantic. Many steerage passengers have crossed several times, and are perfectly aware of what is due to them, and would strongly resent treatment which fell short of that to which they are entitled. A very large number of emigrants have received from their friends in America pre-paid tickets and full information about the voyage, and what they consider as the best steamer to cross in, so that they have the benefit of the experience of those interested in their welfare. There is great competition amongst the Atlantic Lines, and if any one of them were to neglect the comfort of its passengers in the way which has been supposed, it would at once suffer severely from that cause. There can be little doubt that the emigrant class is satisfied with the present arrangements. Occasionally

there may be a grumbler who would grumble under any circumstances, or a sea-lawyer who would practise his vocation anywhere. These are found, however, as often in the cabin as in the steerage.

Again, when persons who are used to luxurious living on shore, and who ought to travel as cabin passengers, choose to go in the steerage, they must expect to encounter something different from that to which they are accustomed. It is impossible to satisfy an "amateur emigrant." But complaints from ordinary steerage passengers, whether emigrants or not, are extremely rare. It is not denied that stewards may sometimes neglect their duty; that, in the difficulty of dealing with large numbers of passengers, discomforts may sometimes arise; or that some just cause of complaint may occasionally occur. But this is inevitable.

The Companies, however, do all that they can to prevent everything of the kind. They make careful regulations to secure the comfort of their passengers, and give strict orders for the carrying of them out. They do their utmost to see that those regulations are obeyed, and are ready to punish any breach of them, and to enquire into any reasonable complaint. If complaints are (as has already been stated) exceedingly rare—notwithstanding the opportunities that are offered on the ship, and by the presence of government officers amongst the passengers at the ports of departure and arrival, ready and anxious to enquire into any grievance, and notwithstanding the information which the steerage passenger derive from his contract ticket, and the advertisement of the Company as to his rights—it may surely be assumed that, as a general rule, and in the vast majority of cases, there is no just ground for discontent of any kind.

The Atlantic Lines believe this to be the case. They are, however, desirous of making every improvement in their power, and do not pretend that perfection is yet reached; but they maintain that their conduct has been most unjustly represented,

and that the public has been entirely misinformed upon the subject by the statements contained in the Press. It is to their interest to make their passengers comfortable: competition is severe amongst them, and they vie with each other in attempts to do so. They are most anxious to succeed, not only for the sake of their own prosperity, but because they are desirous of conducting their business in a fair and liberal spirit, to do their duty towards the emigrant, and provide for his comfort and well-being as much as possible.

(Signed)

THE BRITISH AND NORTH AMERICAN ROYAL MAIL
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STEAM-SHIP CO.

THE MONTREAL OCEAN STEAM-SHIP CO.

THE NATIONAL STEAM-SHIP CO.

THE ANCHOR LINE OF GLASGOW.

THE LIVERPOOL AND GREAT WESTERN STEAM CO.

THE WHITE STAR LINE.

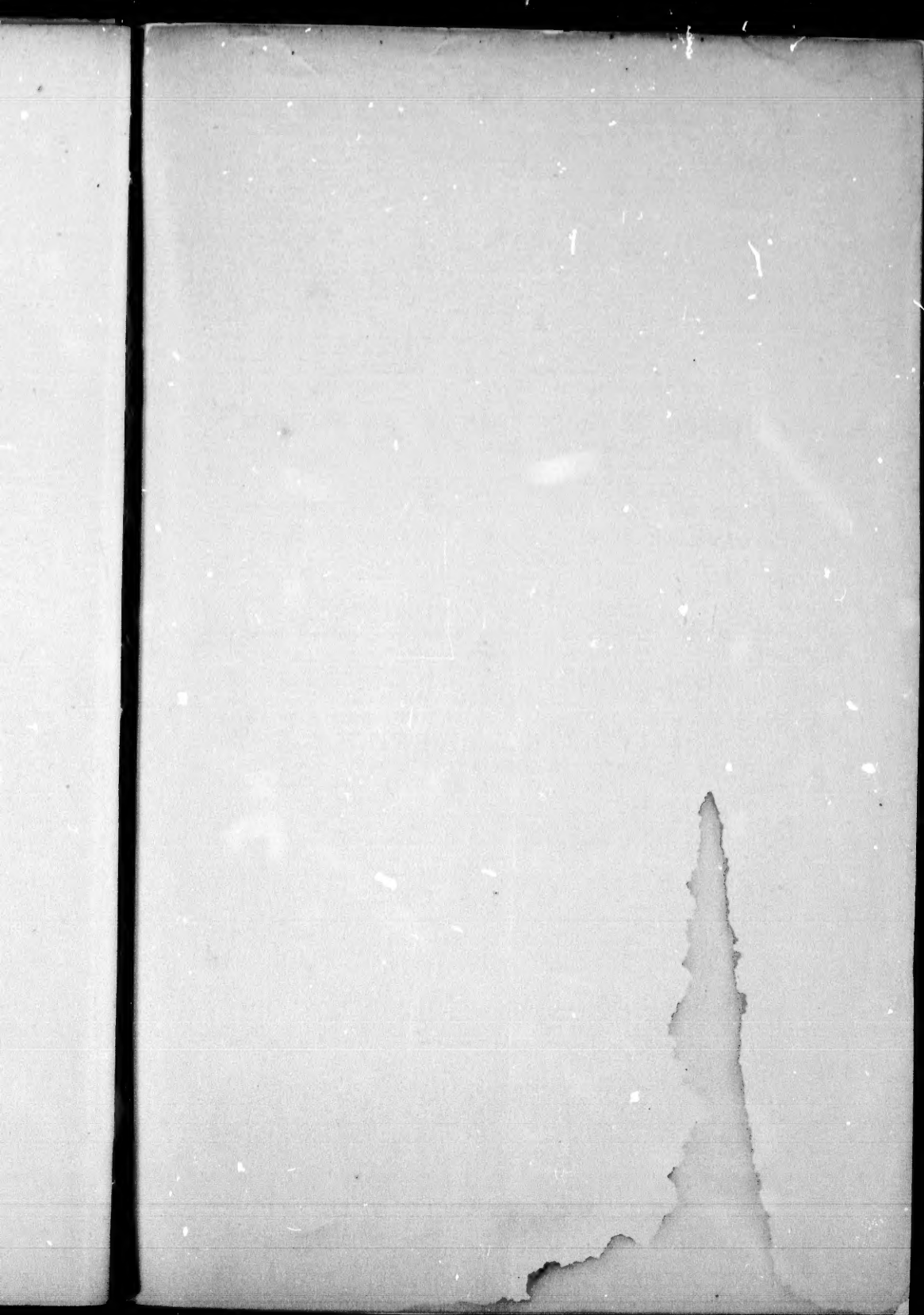
LIVERPOOL, *November, 1872.*

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The Steamers of this Line are well known for their rapid passages. The Saloon and
 sleeping accommodation is unsurpassed for elegance and comfort, and the style of living
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 but they can be obtained on board on the usual terms.

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